

# 2021 Duke Gates Cambridge Recommendations

Congratulations! You have been asked to recommend a student for a highly competitive national scholarship. This is both an honor in that you are mentoring an ambitious and promising student, and a responsibility in that you likely wish to write a letter that can help your student stand out from a pool of other highly promising young people.

Please note:

- ❖ You are *never* required to write for a student. Please only write for those students for whom you believe you can make a good case.
- ❖ All students have waived their rights to see your letters.
- ❖ It is against NCS-OUSF policy to accept letters originally authored by students. We need the letter to be from you.

At any time in this process, from brainstorming the first draft to finalizing your letters, we are delighted to help. We are most available during the early part of the summer, but we do our best to prioritize our letter writers.

Please contact [ncs-ousf@duke.edu](mailto:ncs-ousf@duke.edu).

## Gates Cambridge Scholarship Recommendations Process

<b>Special Considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ This scholarship is a separate application from Cambridge admissions.</li> <li>❖ US and other citizens have different application deadlines. (See below)</li> <li>❖ They aim to select 2 out of 3 PhD Scholars per year</li> </ul>		
<b>Criteria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Academic Excellence</b></li> <li>❖ <b>Reasons for Choice of Course (ie, Degree)</b></li> <li>❖ <b>Commitment to Improving the Lives of Others</b></li> <li>❖ <b>Capacity for Leadership</b></li> </ul>		
<b>Length</b>	Referees may paste/type up to 4,000 characters into the on-line reference or upload a separate letter.		
<b>Endorsement Required</b>	None		
<b>Number of Scholarship Recommenders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>one reference about their fit with the Gates Cambridge scholarship</b></li> <li>❖ (two academic references for admission)</li> </ul>		
<b>US Citizen Application Stages</b>	<b>Stage</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
	Submission	You will receive a link from the Gates Cambridge scholarship application site to submit your letter.	Mid-October
	Finalists Named	Some applicants will be invited to interview	Late December
	Scholars Named		Late January
<b>Other Citizen Application Stages</b>	<b>Stage</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
	Submission	You will receive a link from the Gates Cambridge scholarship application site to submit your letter. Check with your applicant for their precise deadline. (Deadlines vary by degree).	Early December or January
	Finalists Named	Some applicants will be invited to interview	February
	Scholars Named		Late March

## FAQs

### Where do I submit?

You will receive a link from the Gates Cambridge Scholarship Program (check your spam folder) and **will post the letter online yourself**. NCS does not have access to your portal, and cannot submit the letter on your behalf.

### Who do I address the letters to?

Members of the Gates Cambridge Scholars Program Selection Committee

### Things to keep in mind?

Always remember the adage, “Show don’t Tell.”

Readers have many letters to read in a short period of time; be sure to highlight your key points early in the letter, if you can.

### What should the letters contain?

- ❖ Tell the story of the candidate from YOUR point of view.
- ❖ How do you know the student?
- ❖ What is outstanding about their scholarship, leadership, and/or character?
- ❖ Could you tell us a story about a time the student impressed you?
- ❖ How does their study plan fit into their future ambitions?
- ❖ How does this student compare to other students you know? For instance, is the student is in the top 10% of students you have taught, or are even the best in your teaching career?

## Further Resources

<https://www.gatescambridge.org/apply/how-to-apply>

Advice On Recommendations from Penn State: <http://bit.ly/PennRecAdvice>

Stronger Recommendations from Inside Higher Ed: <http://bit.ly/stronger-letters>

We are hearing from foundations that gender bias is a common problem in letters they receive. Lehigh University has a good [website](#) addressing the issue and we commend it to you.